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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a 2-year program in the School of Education at California State University, Los Angeles, that integrates the issues of educational administration and special education for culturally and linguistically different children. The program results in a new pool of bilingual administrators (Spanish, Korean, and Chinese) who hold both a master's degree and a regular administrative credential. The paper concludes by arguing that the emergence of special populations with special needs is not a phenomenon confined only to California; thus, given this climate of cultural change and transition, school administrator preparation programs must adapt to meet the emerging needs of new populations. (JAM)

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BILINGUAL SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATIVE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM: THE FUSION OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

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BILINGUAL SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATIVE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM: THE FUSION OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

INTRODUCTION

The School of Education at California State University, Los Angeles has established a new specialization in the preservice preparation of school principals. Based in the Department of Educational Administration, this specialization integrates the issues of administration and special education for culturally and linguistically different children. The two-year program results in a new pool of bilingual administrators (Spanish, Korean and Chinese) who hold both a Master's degree and a regular administrative credential.

This program is unique in its preservice training of administrators. It identifies those issues in administration of special education programs with diverse bilingual populations and integrates them into the curriculum of the state approved administrative credential program. While current administrator training is largely generic and aimed at training for traditional administrative roles and functions, this effort equips candidates with the skills necessary to address issues and to provide leadership in meeting unique, special or emerging needs of new school populations.

Graduates of the program are expected to qualify for service

as principals of regular schools as well as principals and/or directors of special education sites and programs.

A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

The program is a cooperative effort of major institutions and organizations. In addition to the California State University, Los Angeles, it involves the Los Angeles County Office of Education Division of Special Education (one of the largest in the country), local school districts in Los Angeles County, as well as the cooperative support of the Department of Special Education, California State Department of Education. The program was initially funded through a grant from the United States Department of Education, Handicappped Personnel Preparation Program.

A number of local, state and national experts participated in the design of this program. Among them were university faculty from the departments of Special Education and Educational Administration at California State University, Los Angeles. National experts in bilingual special education were contacted, and they provided sound guidance in the formulation of the program's content. Among them were: Dr. Leonard Baca who has developed bilingual special education programs at the University of Colorado and served as Distinguished Visiting Professor at CSULA in the year of program planning; Dr. Alba Ortiz of the University of Texas at Austin; Dr. Alan Yates of the same institution; and Dr. Phillip Gonzales of the University of

Colorado. Dr. Phillip Chin, former chair of the Council on Exceptional Children, and Dr. Donald Cruikshank of the University of Pennsylvania were also consulted. Additional expertise in program development was provided by Dr. Jennifer Hartman, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education in the Los Angeles County Office of Education, Ms. Julie Rosado of the California State Department of Education, and Dr. Marcel Soriano of the Garvey School District.

A formal advisory council was formed and served a critical function during the planning phase and the first year of the program. This group included bilingual and special education teachers and administrators, principals, personnel directors, and county consultants working with the program as well as university faculty from the educational administration, bilingual education, and special education programs. This group served to bring together bilingual and special educators, groups which did not have routine opportunities for interaction within school districts.

THE CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE REGION

The increasing need for professionals who are bilingual and have special education knowledge is due to the changing demographics of the state and region. Data available to the County in 1984 revealed that 17.4 percent of all immigrants coming to the United States that year planned to locate in one of five metropolitan areas in California. The same study reported

that 30 percent of all immigrants counted in 1980 lived in Los Angeles County. It is estimated that by the year 2010, California will have a majority population made up of ethnic minority groups.

The latest enrollment figures for Los Angeles County reveal that 71 % of all students have a bicultural background (Los Angeles County Office of Education, 1988). The same is true of the 50,000 students in special education classes and the more than 100,000 students in the County's special school population. Obviously linguistic problems add to the difficulties of attempting to educate handicapped children. The concern further extends to black children who may speak a different quality of English, and are often placed inappropriately in special education programs.

According to administrators in the Los Angeles County Office of Education, there are an estimated 1,600 special education sites in the county. It is worth noting that there is a significant underrepresentation of culturally different principals in the schools. At the time this program was conceived, available data revealed that of the 16,283 school principals in California, 15,337 or 94% were white, 425 or 2.6% were black, 355 or 2.1% were Hispanic, 83 or 1.2% were Asian and 67 or 1.1% were American Indian (California State Department of Education, 1981-82).

All the school districts participating in the program are

concerned with the need to increase the ethnic diversity of their line administrators and the need to understand the dramatic impact of cultural and linguistic changes in their school populations.

PROGRAM CONTENT

The program's content is delivered through three main strategies. First, current courses in the regular administrative credential program are expanded to include components related to bilingual special education. The legal aspects of both fields take on added significance in the basic school law course, for instance. Second, one course each quarter has content specific to issues of bilingual special education and the administrative role. Examples of such courses are "Special Education for Culturally" and "Linguistically Different Students and Cross Cultural Communication for Administrators." Third, candidates are provided a special field practicum in local schools. Each administrative intern works with a mentor/administrator who guides and supervises the candidate in gaining experience in both regular and special education sites and programs.

Rather than adding a few additional courses to the current administrative training program, this project specifically integrates the issues of bilingual special education into the core curriculum of educational administration. This approach is designed, not only to inform and educate about bilingual special education, but also to legitimize part of the responsibility to

provide education for all children. The general goal is to show that all functions of administration must consider the needs of exceptional children with linguistic differences.

Faculty for the program are selected from the Division of Administration and Counseling, and the Division of Special Education. In addition practicing special and regular education administrators and experts in educationing culturally and linguistically different students are recruited as part time adjunct faculty.

The program's goals are to provide training that includes the theoretical and conceptual issues, that identifies the skills needed to be effective in a line administrative role, and that teaches candidates how to apply the same to real school problems. Thus, graduates of the program are prepared to initiate, advocate, develop, support and manage programs in a variety of educational settings. The overall skills and competencies to be gained include the following:

- Awareness and knowledge of the issues of assessing exceptional children with cultural and linguistic differences and the relationship to appropriate educational programs from identification to program placement.

- Skills in providing programmatic and instructional supervision to improve programs.

- Recognition of the role of regular administrators in

providing leadership and the application of problem solving skills in initiating, facilitating, advocating and implementing programs.

- Skills in using demographic data for program planning.

- Awareness of organizational, political and social barriers impinging on school programs.

- Understanding change processes and the skills needed to manage change on a continuing basis.

- Awareness and knowledge of the ways cultural and educational differences impact regular school programs.

- Ability to evaluate and assess all phases of special education programs.

CONCLUSION

The field of educational administration continues to undergo extraordinary changes as the 1990's and the new century approaches. To some the concept of a bilingual special education administrative intern project may be completely foreign. To others it may represent a surprising merger of two very disparate interest groups. To a third group it may suggest a practical effort to meet the changing needs of one university's service area.

While the demographic changes described are most dramatic in California, we would argue that the emergence of special populations with special needs is certainly not a phenomenon confined only to California. While many states may not be experiencing the dramatic influx of immigrant students in their schools, they are experiencing significant changes brought about by unprecedented transitions in the workplace. The movement from a national to a global economy has significantly increased the competitive instincts of most state goverments. In our judgment, the race to link improved schools to this new economic arena has not slowed, but has actually quickened in most parts of the country.

Given this climate of change, school administrator preparation programs must adapt to meet the emerging needs of new populations. If they fail to do that, they will remain on the defensive for the foreseeable future. As stated in the American

Association of Colleges for Teacher Education position paper "School Leadership Preparation: A Preface for Action,"

> School administrators risk becoming an anachronism if their preparation programs in schools, colleges amd departments of education do not respond to calls for change in preparing them for professional leadership functions (Shibles, p. 1).

The Bilingual Special Education Administrative Intern Program at California State University, Los Angeles, demonstrates the fact that some educational administration departments are not on the defensive, but are actually leading in the fight to change some of the negative perceptions about our field.

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